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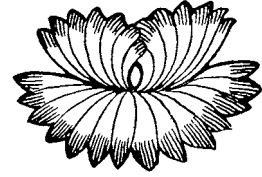
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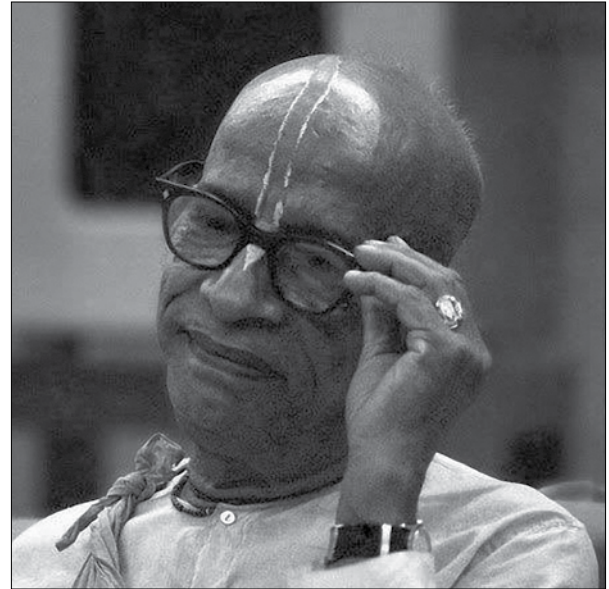
DEVOTIONAL DRAMATICS

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

This *prahlāda-caritra* drama is very instructive. Although it is not played on a very nice stage, the feeling expressed by the devotees in playing this *prahlāda-caritra* has become very successful. We want to understand the feeling. Externally, we may not be very much equipped. Krishna takes the feeling. (Lecture, 25 May 1975.)

So you have got some talent for writing and producing dramas and now Krishna has given you the opportunity for dovetailing your talents in his service. This is very good. When I go there I shall be very glad to see these dramas enacted. Yes, I acted the part of Adwaita Prabhu in one such drama. I organized that theater performance in my youth. My friends were trained up and we performed. It was very much appreciated by the highest class of men in Kolkata. We were invited to many places to perform the drama. Lord Chaitanya inaugurated these *vaiṣṇava* dramas. In such dramas, the actors must always be *vaiṣṇavas*. Outsiders may help, but devotees should have all the major roles. (Letter, 13 April 1971.)

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter, and I have noted the contents, along with the drama-script from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. It is very nice. This kind



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

of play-acting is wanted. Now introduce it to your country-men very nicely presented. Emphasis should be given to the words of the *Bhāgavatam*. They are spiritual and will have powerful effect if someone only hears them with attention. Do not be enamored by fancy costumes and stage-decorations. They will only distract. Real acting art is to know how to speak. The greatest dramas, even in your Western culture, they can be played without any extra equipment.

Just like Shakespeare: One time I saw they were playing a drama — I think Hamlet or something like that — and only two men were there on a bare stage, and everyone was praising. So the art is to catch their ears. Now in that spirit go on with your work and try to do something wonderful. (Letter, 13 December 1972.)

Even one hundred years ago in India, all dramatic performances were centered on the superhuman activities of the Supreme Lord. The common people would be verily entertained by the performances of dramas, and *yātrā* parties played wonderfully on the superhuman activities of the Lord. Thus even the illiterate agriculturist would be a participant in the knowledge of Vedic literature, despite a considerable lack of academic qualifications. Therefore, expert players in drama, dancers, singers, speakers, etc., are required for the spiritual enlightenment of the common man. (Purport to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 1.11.20.)

Everyone enjoys play-acting, only there is at present a dearth of proper material for elevating the general mass of people to the proper standard. Practically, the whole world is going to hell. There is no decency, no gentleman anywhere. So we have to portray to the people of this fallen age of *Kali-yuga* what is the right standard for their behavior. When they see that, “Oh, here is such nice activity, such nice people!” they will automatically change. Simply we have to engage their senses in the right taste. So this drama-playing is very good presentation for attracting their attention and displaying Krishna Consciousness very beautifully. Make everything very simple, without too much fancy costumes, and the real message will come out very nicely. (Letter, 22 December 1971.) ❀

HEROES OF A DRAMA

Srila Rupa Goswami's *Nāṭaka Candrikā, texts 7-8*

svayaṁ prakāṭitaiśvāryo divyaḥ kṛṣṇādir īritah
divyo 'pi nara-ceṣṭatvād divyādivyo raghūdvahaḥ
adivyo dharmā-putrādir eṣu kṛṣṇo guṇādhikah
nāyakaṁ sarve guṇāḥ sarve yatra sarva-vidhāḥ smṛtāḥ

In a drama, the central hero can be of three types — the *divya*, the *divyādivya* and the *adivya*. Those heroes, such as Lord Krishna, whose divine opulences are always self-manifest, are categorized

as *divya*. Heroes that possess divine opulences yet behave as ordinary humans, such as Lord Rama, are categorized as *divyādivya*. The *adivyas* are human heroes of saintly character, like Yudhisthir and others. Among all such heroes, Lord Krishna is certainly the most exalted hero, since he simultaneously exhibits the characteristics of all three categories of heroes to a superlative degree. ❀

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das, from the Sanskrit at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)

THE DRAMAS OF RUPA GOSWAMI

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda *Swami Maharaja*

Srila Rupa Goswami wrote two dramas — *Lalita-mādhava* and *Vidagdha-mādhava*. All the pastimes of Krishna are described there. When Rupa Goswami was writing these two dramas, Mahaprabhu told him, *kṛṣṇere bāhira nāhi kariha vraja haite vraja chāḍi' kṛṣṇa kabhu nā yāna kāhānte* — “Do not try to take Krishna out of Vrindavan, for he does not go anywhere else at any time.” (*Cc. antya* 1.66) Krishna never goes even one step out from Vrajabhumi.

So how did Rupa Goswami keep up the order of Mahaprabhu? In *Lalita-mādhava*, until the second act all the pastimes are taking place within Vrajabhumi. In the second act there is the killing of Shankachuda. In the third act, Akrura comes and takes Krishna and Balaram to Mathura. That means he took Krishna away from Vrajabhumi. Then there is *viraha*, feeling pangs of separation. The *vrajavāsīs*, especially the damsels of Vrajabhumi headed by Srimati Radharani, all felt acute pangs of separation.

When Krishna sat in Akrura's chariot, the *gopīs* were lying on the ground in front of the chariot. They were saying, “Let the wheels of the chariot roll on our bodies. Let us give up our life, let us die. We cannot survive. Krishna is our life. Akrura is taking away our life. How can we survive?” *Lalita-mādhava* (3.21) says that then Paurṇamasi narrated a message from Krishna, *bhāvī bhavyāḥ punar api mayā maṅgalaḥ saṅgamo vaḥ* — “Oh dear *gopīs*, you somehow spend these very distressful days, feeling such acute pang of separation. In the future there will again be association with me. That will be all-auspicious.”

So a question arises here. Mahaprabhu ordered Rupa Goswami, “Don't take Krishna out of Vrajabhumi.”

But he took him out. Akrura came with the chariot and took him away.

Did he violate Mahaprabhu's order? It seems externally that he did so. He took Krishna away, following which *mathurā-līlā* and *dvārakā-līlā*, pastimes in Mathura and Dwarka, took place. However, in *pūrṇa-manorathah* — the final act of *Lalita-mādhava* — a wonderful incident emerges. If you analyze it in *tattva*, you will see that Rupa Goswami never violated Mahaprabhu's order. It is so wonderful that many cannot understand.

What happened is that Radharani entered into the Yamuna and drowned. Kalindi, Yamuna Devi, took Radha and handed her over to her father Surya, the sun god. The sun god handed over Radha to his dear devotee Satrajita. Satrajita's daughter is Satyabhama. Radha entered into Satyabhama. Radha is now in Dwaraka as Satyabhama. This is simply wonderful. Can you understand it? In the final act you will find that all of Radharani's girl companions are there in Dwarka. So once again there is union in Dwarka. It is inconceivable, such bliss.

At that time, in Dwarka, Krishna said to Radha, *prāṇeśvari rādhe prārthayasva kim ataḥ param te priyam karavāṇi*, "O My dear Radha, what can I do to please you? Please tell me." Radha as Satyabhama said:

*yā te līlā-rasa-parimalodgāri-vanyāparitā
dhanyā kṣaunī vilasati vṛtā māthurī mādhurībhiḥ
tatrasmābhiś caṭula-paśupī-bhāva-mugdāntarābhiḥ
sānvītas tvam kalaya vadanollāsi-veṅur vihāram*

"O my dear fickle-natured Krishna, this is my prayer. Please come at least once more to Vrajabhumi. That Vrajabhumi is still there; all the places of your sports are all there. The jungle is there, the peacocks are there, the river Yamuna is there. All these are there and all are waiting for you. How beautiful is Vrindavan! Its beauty is incomparable. Please come, please come. We damsels of Vrajabhumi are all going there. You please come. Let us all surround you and start again your *vraja-līlā*. Again, you please regain your form bent in three places, holding your flute and playing so sweetly. If you will once again set your lotus feet in Vrajabhumi then my desire will be fulfilled." (*Lalita-mādhava* 10.261)

Krishna said, *tathāstu*, "Let it be so."

Then Radharani said, *kadham bia*, "How will it be? You are here in Mathura, in Dwarka. How will



Jaipur, Rajasthan. Circa 1820

Radha and Krishna dancing

it be possible?" Krishna didn't say anything. He just looked towards the southern direction as if waiting for somebody.

Just then, Gargamuni's daughter, Gargi, and Ekanamsha, the daughter who was born from the womb of mother Yashoda, arrived there. Mother Yashoda had given birth to twins. One was a son and another a daughter. The son is Krishna and the daughter is Ekanamsha.

That Ekanamsha is *yogamāyā*. Yogamaya said, *sakhi rādhe! mātra saṁśayaṁ kṛthāḥ. yato bhavatyah śrīmati gokule tatraiva vartante kintu mayaiiva kāla-kṣepaṇārtham anyathā prapañcitam. tad etan manasy anubhūyatām. kṛṣṇo 'py eṣa tatra gata eva pratīyatām*. — "O Radhe, don't have any doubt. You are all now in Vrajabhumi, you are not in Mathura and Dwarka. You are all in Vrajabhumi. I have made all these arrangements. I have acted in such a way that it seems you are far away from Vrajabhumi in Mathura and Dwarka. But actually you are all in Vrajabhumi. Krishna is here and you are all here." (*Lalita-mādhava* 10.264) How is it? This is the activity of *yogamāyā*.

Then Radharani said, *bahiraṅga-janālakṣatayā śrī-gokulam apī sva-svarūpair alaṅkaravāmeti* — "O Krishna, please come. Let us manifest that *vraja-līlā*, *vrndāvana-līlā*, again, which the *bahiraṅga*, the conditioned souls, the *jīvas* in the material world, cannot understand. There we will manifest our *nitya-līlā*, eternal pastimes. (*Lalita-mādhava* 10.268)

Krishna replied, *priye! tathāstu. tad ehi, svasus tavābhyarthanām abandhyāṁ karavāvaḥ* —



Courtesy of the Vrindavan Research Institute

A sample of Srila Rupa Goswami's original handwriting

“O My dear Radhe, let your desire be fulfilled!”
(*Lalita-mādhava* 10.269)

Krishna is always in Vrajabhumi. The pastimes there are eternal. Both Radha and Krishna became amazed, “Oh, what is this?” This is the activity of *yogamāyā*.

Therefore it is said, “Krishna never goes even one step out of Vrindavan.” So it is true. It is reality, not mythology. In *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta*, Srila Sanatan Goswami has written how Krishna had a dream. Krishna said, “Oh, I had a long dream! I went to Dwarka, became king, and married thousands of wives.” Krishna is absolute. His dream is also absolute. It is reality. ❀

— From a lecture in Los Angeles. 28 June 1994.



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**ALL GLORIES TO SRILA
RUPA GOSWAMI**

The Vaiṣṇava Poet Madho

*jaya jaya rūpa mahārāsa sāgara
daraśana paraśana vacana rasāyana
ānandahuke gāgara*

All glories, all glories to Srila Rupa Goswami, the great ocean of transcendental mellows. His sight, words and touch are all like pitchers full of ecstatic mellows.

*ati gambhīra dhīra karuṇāmaya
prema-bhakatika āgara
ujjala-prema-mahāmaṇi prakāṭita
deśa gaura vairāgara*

His nature is extremely grave, sober and merciful. He is a repository of loving devotional service unto Krishna. This brilliant gem amongst ecstatic lovers of Krishna appeared in the land of Lord Gaura.

*sataguṇa-maṇḍita paṇḍita rañjana
vṛndāvana-nija-nāgara
kiriti vimala yaśa śunatahī mādhō
satata rahala hiye jāgara*

He is imbued with all divine qualities, and is dear to all scholars. He is the leader amongst all divine lovers of Vrindavan. Hearing of his glories and spotless fame, Madho alertly meditates on him within his heart. ❀

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